The Works Manager said

" I COULD DO IT WITH MY
EYES SHUT "

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Production and Engineering Bulletin, c.1
v. 2, No. 8, June-July, 1943
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LED BY HIS DOG this blind aircraft worker walks confidently through the works to the Department where he is employed.

The Works Manager said—

"I Could Do It with my Eyes Shut"

SOME months ago the Works Manager of a London factory, badly needing four men for work upon an urgent war contract, telephoned to the Employment Exchange for help in filling the vacancies. "Sorry," said the Vacancy Officer, "we haven't one man on the Register."

"But I simply must have somebody," said the Works Manager, "and though it's an important job, it's a very simple one; I could do it with my eyes shut."

"In that case," said the Vacancy Officer, "what about trying some blind men?"

The Works Manager, completely surprised, but quickly receptive to a new idea, decided to have four men along for an interview. And after having seen and talked with them, he engaged them right away.

Within a week the Vacancy Officer had another call from the factory.

"About those blind men you sent me!" said the Works Manager. "Well, I could do with four more like them. When can they start?"

That was just one instance of a process that has been going on all over the country. Industry is discovering that there are many jobs in the factories for which sight is not necessary. And —what perhaps is of greater moment—blind people are discovering to their great joy that they can, after all, make an active and immediate contribution to the war effort.

Dealing first of all with the man-power aspect, let us consider three indisputable facts. They are not as well known as they should be.

(1) The employment of blinded persons on industrial work has long since passed the

In an Aluminium Works

Because of war requirements the management was faced with phenomenally increased demands, and these pictures show some of the ways in which an unprecedented shortage of labour was met.

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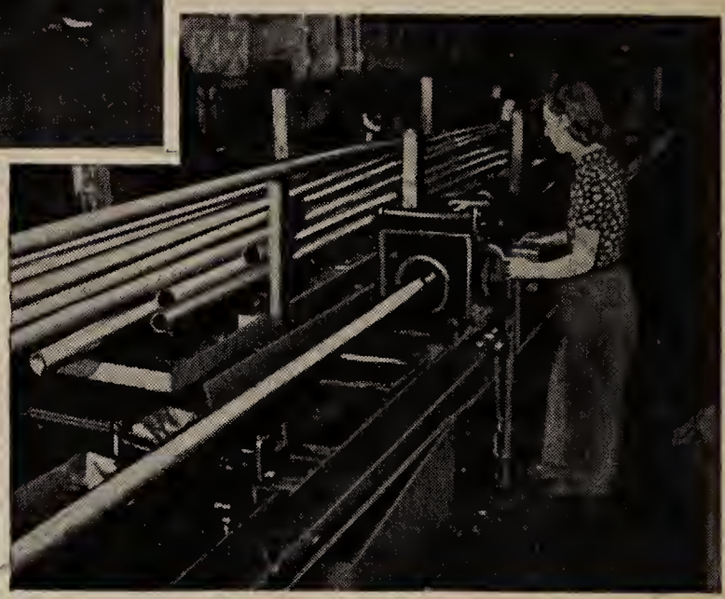

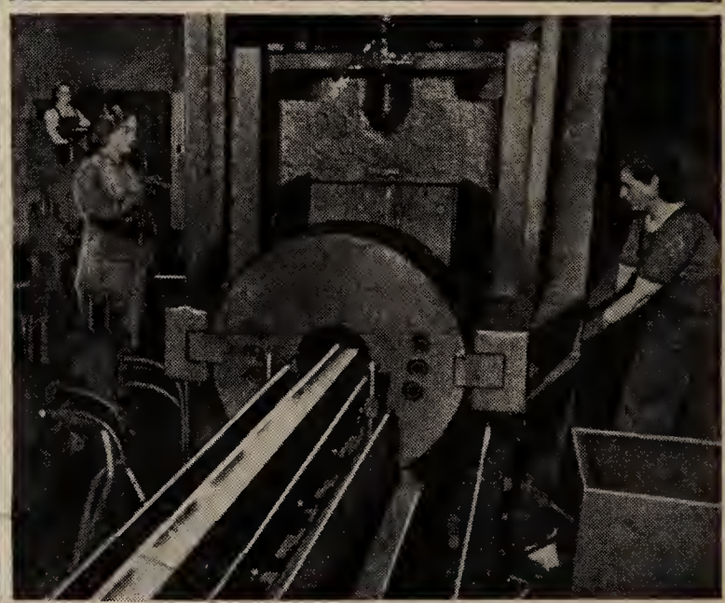

IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS women are employed by this large firm, the jobs illustrated above being merely representative of the varied work they have undertaken successfully. The top picture shows two women operating a coil shearing machine. The lower picture to the left shows two women operating a sheet stretcher machine. The two pictures to the right show (upper) a woman operating a drawbench. She is drawing tubes for use in aircraft construction. The lower right-hand picture shows, in the foreground, a large extrusion press being operated by a woman.

experimental stage. It is now well established in practice. Within the past twelve months more than 700 blind men and women have been placed by the Ministry of Labour and National Service on jobs which were formerly done by sighted workers.

(2) Blind workers in industry often show unusual powers of concentration on the job ; workshop incidents which distract the sighted worker's attention have no power to distract the blind worker.

Moreover, his handicap in the one direction is often accompanied by super-sensitivity of touch and hearing. From the early days of the war Germany employed blind men on certain classes of work because their superior sense of touch was a definite asset. And the keen hearing of the sightless operative often enables him to detect a blunted cutter, or a slight irregularity in the running of a machine, that a person with normal powers would miss.

(3) Both the number and variety of war jobs which can be done by the sightless worker are immensely greater than is generally realised. The accompanying list of jobs on which the blind have been successfully employed should dispel, once and for all, the old-fashioned and mistaken belief that their vocational sphere in war industry is a narrow one.

Even as it stands our list of jobs for the blind is a surprisingly long one ; but it is continually being extended, as more and more managements discover the latent industrial abilities of sightless workers.*

It is important to note that this list is not one of mere recommendations. It is a statement of accomplished fact, and all the jobs listed have been done satisfactorily by blind personnel.

The list was compiled as the result of the Ministry's work in collaboration with St. Dunstan's : the National Institute for the Blind : the Regional Associations for the Blind : and the local Blind Welfare agencies, which know the blind person and normally give a certificate that he is suitable for industrial employment. The Ministry also co-operates with St. Dunstan's in the placing in Industry of blind persons who have been specially trained for certain kinds of machine work.

A scrutiny of the list—and it well repays the close attention of executives—shows that the majority of the blind persons so far placed are employed on simple process work which, of course, varies from factory to factory. In general, such work neither lends itself to, nor needs, preliminary training ; it has been found in practice that a blind man or woman picks up the work very quickly and settles down to ordinary workshop conditions in a remarkably short time.

Quite as significant as the variety displayed in the list itself is the fact that there have been no reports of accidents or injury. It is found—as might have been expected—that sighted workers readily undertake to help and guide blind workers in the early days of factory employment.

The general experience of Blind Welfare Officers is that the blind factory worker is more than ordinarily careful, and that the risk of accidents is negligible. The chief Insurance Companies do not refuse to insure blind persons ; nor do they increase the premium payable for a blind worker, provided they receive an undertaking from the employer that the work is within the worker's capacity.

Managements will find that, given an opportunity, many blind workers soon evince a considerable degree of skill. They have exceedingly sensitive hands, and a good proportion have proved themselves capable of intricate assembly work of various kinds.

There have been many favourable reports from the employers of blind persons. Comment has been made on their sustained effort on competitive work, their high output and, in some cases, on the example they set to sighted workers. Here is a letter received by the Manager of an Employment Exchange from one employer :—

> " It is now 2 months since you sent us Mr. ——, the blind man, and I am writing to tell you that I have had a very good report on his work from his Foreman.
>
> " He is employed in the Instrument Assembly Shop and has learnt to assemble various small electrical parts. His sense of touch is now so developed that he can immediately discover any fault or roughness which he is able to rectify by filing.
>
> " We are very satisfied with his work and would be willing to employ one or two more blinded men recommended by you."

We have purposely confined ourselves to the hitherto-neglected sphere of work for the blind in the shops. This is where they can make their most unexpected contribution to the war effort ; but it should be remembered that many blind men and women have been trained as Shorthand-

(*Continued on page* 349)

*EDITOR'S NOTE.—*Because the employment of the blind is progressing so fast, the list of occupations which accompanies this article had to be extensively revised before publication, although it had been prepared quite recently.*

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(Left) Working with ply-wood. (Right) Aircraft assembly work.

Occupations in which Blind Persons have been Placed

Absestos Processes :—
- Disintegrator feeding.
- Joint washer moulding.
- Sanding, boring, and shoeing brake linings.

Assembling :—
- Ball bearings.
- Base plates for rifle butts.
- Crash helmets.
- Frames—wood or metal.
- Lighters.
- Panels.
- Petrol tanks.
- Pilots' goggles.
- Plastic components.
- Wireless masts.
- Sub-assembly—wood or metal.

Bakery work.

Bevelling and buffing motor and motor cycle inner tubes.

Boot repairing.

Boxing shell cases.

Brewery (Conditioning Dept.)

Builder's handyman.

Canvassing.

Catering :—
- Canteen Assistant.
- Kitchen Assistant at R.O.F.

Cellulose acetate injection moulding.

Checker's mate.

Cleansing shells with compressed air.

Clerical work :—
- Filing Clerk.
- Office Messenger.
- Shorthand-typing.
- Telephone operating.

Coir rope laying.

Clothing presser.

Crate painting.

Electrical processes :—
- Electrician's mate.
- Sleeving copper wire with silk plaited tubing.
- Taping of armatures.
- Transformer core building.
- Wiring in plating shop (radio).
- Wrapping tape round wires.

Engineering Work :—
- Bolting.

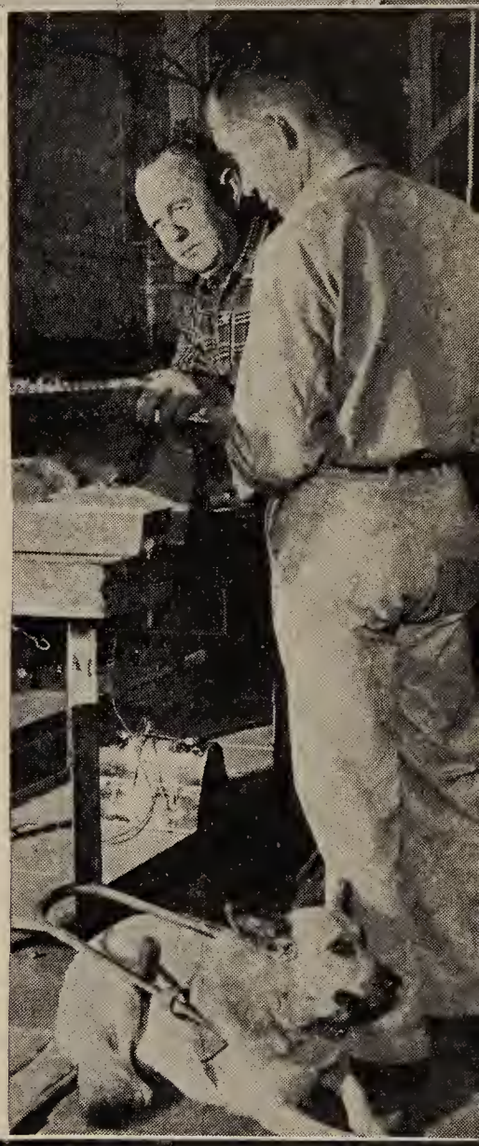
(Centre) Filing flanged ferrules. (Right) The two men shown below are frazing small parts.
(Left) This blind girl is assembling Timken bearings. (*All three copyrights reserved*)

(*Copyright The Daily Mirror*) (Left) De-burring metal parts. (*Both copyrights reserved*)
(Right) A blind worker gets a helping hand, and (Centre) de-icing boot assembly.

Bushing bearing brackets.
Cleaning out shell cases on inspection bench.
De-burring.
Dieing and fixing studs on cylinder blocks.
Die-lapping and polishing.
Filing to template.
Fitter, unskilled.
Fitting bearings.
Fitting links to gun belts.
Frazing of light castings.
Gauging (including 3-pin).
Hand punching and stamping.
Honing.
Inspection of parts against small gauges.
Inspection by set gauges.
Inspection by touch—shell cases, small parts, hand grenades and aircraft components.
Inspection of petrol tanks.
Lapping by hand.
Labouring.
Sorting and grading rivets, nuts and bolts.

Machine Operating :—
- Band grinding.
- Capstan lathe (not to fine limits).
- Drilling—single head vertical machines with fixed jigs.
- Drilling (portable power tools with fixed jigs).
- Grinding on semi-automatics.
- Grummett power press.
- Hand stamping.
- Lapping.
- Light power press.
- Polishing of valve stem interiors.
- Skiving.
- Stamping and punching presses.

Mechanical blue-printing.
Polishing. Reaming.
Routing.
Sand blasting.
Screw fitting.
Screw tapping of bombs.
Sealing oil pressure pipes.
Studding or bolting up crank cases.
Tapping out cylinder blocks.



(Left) Bolting castings together. (Right) Attachment of locking wire to bolts.

(*Both copyrights reserved*)

(Centre) De-burring tubes. (Left) Inspection. (Right) Instrument assembly.

Testing and re-tapping threads.
Tool greaser.
Viewing (see also Inspection).
Filing, sanding and piercing Bakelite and other plastics.
Hot press operator—plastic moulding.
Knitting machine operating.
Labouring—general and light.
Leather work.
Leather strainer.
Loading and unloading paper.
Milk bottle washing.
Packing, wrapping, bundling.
Painting shells in R.O.F.
Porters (including lodge porter).
Progress chaser.
Rope hanking, coiling and splicing.
Salvage :—
  Extracting nails from timber.
  Sorting (Local Authority).
Servicing street danger lamps.
Soap press operator.
Soft toy stuffing.
Solderers.
Storekeeping.
Trollier.
Tobacco leaf stripper.
Tube manufacture :—
  Drawer. Soaper.

Unloading shell cases from conveyor belt and reloading to conveyors.
Welfare Officer at R.O.F.
Wire and Spring processes :—
  Hand coiling of springs.
  Hand making of wire splinter netting.
  Operating spring knotting machines.
  Riddle and sieve making.
  Wire cutting, crimping and forming, by machine.
  Wire fluffing and clenching.
  Wire seat making.
Woodworking :—
  Carpenter (Estate repairs).
  Cleaning scarf joints.
  Fairing surfaces by hand or portable disc sander.
  Glueing plys and forming shaped spars.
  Loading self-feeding machines of various types.
  Operating 3-drum sander.
  Plywood assembly.
  Sandpapering and polishing aircraft propellers.
Wool Blender.
Wrapping cycle tyres by machine.

(Left) Removing burrs. (Right) Assembling castings.

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(*Continued from page* 345)
Typists and Telephone Operators, and are releasing sighted workers for more important war work. (The Ministry of Labour and National Service itself employs 11 blind shorthand-typists and more than 50 blind telephonists.)

So far, this article has dealt objectively with the employment of the blind in war industry, merely giving the facts. There is, no doubt, an additional consideration in the mind of the reader—the humanitarian aspect of the problem.

We do not propose to enlarge on this humanitarian angle here, though there is much that might be said. It is, however, strictly relevant to mention that St. Dunstan's, inaugurated 27 years ago, has had the experience of training and maintaining 1,000 craftsmen, in addition to telephonists, poultry-farmers, masseurs, etc.

As long ago as 1936 St. Dunstan's opened a machine shop to carry out experiments, using war-blinded men as machinists, with highly satisfactory results. The operatives, between 40 and 50 years old, were not specially selected, and had no machining experience. Simple machine-guards were designed where necessary, and—incredible as it may appear—even at that pioneering stage there were no accidents.

In the light of all these facts we need not urge managements further to study the accompanying list. It shows how the sightless can make a real and immediate contribution to the solution of the man-power problem. It is put forward on the factual ground that here is a source of labour supply immediately available.

To obtain the services of a blind man or woman application should be made to your local Employment Exchange, which can arrange the necessary interview. (Perhaps it should also be stated that employers are not expected to keep on a blind worker if he should prove to be unsuitable for the job ; but experience shows that to be an unlikely contingency.)

Finally, although we have presented the facts dispassionately, we cannot forget that many of these men were blinded in the last war. Certainly it is impossible for the men themselves to forget that experience. In many instances one result of their handicap was the dreadful thought that their sacrifice of 1914-18 appeared now to debar them from helping to win this war.

As a matter of fact this belief or fear was unfounded. For they *can* help. Perhaps they can help in your factory? You know the 'phone number of your Employment Exchange ; but you cannot ever know how welcome such an inquiry from your firm might be.

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BLIND WORKERS are not necessarily confined to one job. Where several are employed it is often advantageous for them to be able to change-over as required by the work, to break the monotony.

The following account is particularly noteworthy because it is extracted from a leaflet issued by a well-known firm to its employees. Not intended for wider publication, it gives the management's point of view on how toolroom staffing difficulties were overcome.

Training Toolroom Workers

IT is gratifying to describe how through mutual co-operation between the Management and one of the Ministry of Labour's G.T.C.'s (Government Training Centres), capable trainees have been produced who, under skilled supervision, will soon make their way to fully skilled status for their particular task.

Early in 1942 when it became apparent that there would be the greatest difficulty in obtaining skilled male labour for the tool room to meet expanding production, the Management took the long view and sought the assistance of the Ministry of Labour.

Personal contact was made with the Manager of a G.T.C. in the North West Region through the local Ministry of Labour, and, as a result, it was decided that selected trainees, women as well as men, who were fairly advanced on the normal G.T.C. course, should, after its completion, receive specialised higher grade training on the actual work they would do in the tool room.

G.T.C. instructors visited the Works for a few days so as to be fully conversant with the specialised type of work. We were fortunate in welcoming two very capable instructors with tool room experience.

The syllabus for higher grade training was agreed between G.T.C. and ourselves. It is predominantly practical; for example, trained die millers on completion of their normal course practise milling simple impressions in mild steel; then actual practice takes place in die milling, use being made of obsolete or scrap dies which have been refaced, or bar ends of NC or NCM material which are marked out by our own staff.

We supply the necessary gauges and drawings. During training the closest liaison is maintained to overcome any difficulties as it is essential that personal contact with the trainees is established.

Results achieved have been excellent. With further progressive training in our tool room, trainees will help considerably in our die and tool production.

The following trainees have been engaged :—

6 Shapers (women).
2 Die Millers (men).
1 Die Miller (woman).
2 Turners (men).
2 Tracers (women).
2 Gauge Makers (women).
1 Cutter Grinder (woman).
1 Inspector (man).
1 Inspector (woman).

We have a further batch of trainees—four die millers (women) and two shapers (women), in an advanced stage of higher grade training and ready for transfer when further machines are available.

Trainees are also doing good work in the production of special milling cutters and the annealing, re-cutting, hardening, and grinding of milling cutters despatched from the Works. The trainees can be congratulated on their high standard of work. D.H.W.

GUIDE TO GOVERMENT TRAINING CENTRES

MANAGERS wishing to contact the Manager of the nearest Government Training Centre may like to make a note of the telephone number, etc. Here is the list :—

Centre	Telephone No.
AINTREE (Stopgate Lane, Liverpool, 9)	Aintree 1635/6
BIRMINGHAM (Holyhead Road)	Northern 3621
BIRMINGHAM (Anne Road)	Smethwick 1808
BRISTOL (Radnor Road)	Bristol 44061-3
EDMONTON (Eleys Estate, N.18)	Tottenham 1501-3
GLASGOW (Cowlairs Road)	Springburn 5061-2
GLASGOW (Thornliebank Road)	Giffnock 0506
HOUNSLOW (Hounslow Heath)	Hounslow 2236-8
LEEDS (385, Kirkstall Road)	Leeds 38761-2
LEEDS (Harehills Lane)	Leeds 44661-2
LEICESTER (Gipsy Lane)	Leicester 61262-3
LETCHWORTH (Pixmore Ave.)	Letchworth 1084-6
MANCHESTER (Alms Hill Rd., Cheetham)	Collyhurst 1717-9
NEWPORT (55/59, Chepstow Road)	Newport 5181
PARK ROYAL (Gorst Road, N.W.10)	Willesden 7581-2
SLOUGH (Slough Trading Estate)	Slough 23326-7
SOUTHAMPTON (Redbridge)	Totton 81271
TREFOREST (Treforest Trading Estate, Pontypridd)	Taffs Well 92-3
WADDON (Stafford Road)	Croydon 6191-3
WALLSEND (The Stadium)	Wallsend 63026-7
WATFORD (Southwold Road)	Watford 3318-9

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